

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 3 to 22 are in the application, of which Claims 1 and 22 are the independent claims. Claim 1 and the specification have been amended to attend to formal matters. Claim 22 has been newly-added. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

In the February 26, 2004 Office Action, Claims 1 and 3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 4,808,808 (Karasaki); Claims 1 and 2 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) over U.S. Publication No. 2001/0045989 A1 (Onuki); Claim 4 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Karasaki in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,181,378 (Horie); Claim 5 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Karasaki in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,624,890 (Komiya); and Claim 6 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Karasaki in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,108,036 (Harada). The rejections are respectfully traversed.

Claims 1 and 3 to 21 are believed to be allowable for the reasons given in the May 26, 2004 Amendment.

According to one feature of the invention as recited by new Claim 22, the light blocking means is removable from an optical path of the image pickup optical unit.

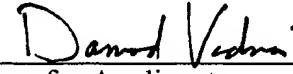
Karasaki, Onuki, Horie, Komiya, and Harada, either singly or in combination, are not seen to teach or suggest at least the foregoing feature.

Applicant therefore concludes that the applied documents do not teach or suggest the claimed invention, and it is respectfully requested that the Section 102 and 103 rejections be withdrawn.

No other matters being raised, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is courteously solicited.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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